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GAZETTE

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Wednesday, February 16, Year 0

EMERGENCY

A Requiem for Margie Hart

Obituary, page 50 of that wanky Backstage newspaper:

Margaret Hart Ferraro, Burlesque to B'way

Strutting and stripping as "Margie Hart" throughout the 1930s and '40s, the famously flaming redhead Margaret Hart Ferraro died January 26, after a long illness. She was believed to have been 84. Hart was reputedly the first burlesque queen to remove her G-string in her act, prompting Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia to shut down her performance venues. The Missouri farm girl who ran away to join a chorus line in Chicago later went legit in the theater world, appearing in the national tours of the Broadway productions of "Light Up the Sky" and "Cry Havoc". In the 1970s she married L.A. City Councilman John Ferraro and became a real estate mogul.

I was looking in the Backstage paper 'cause I need some kind of no- or low-skill day job. My night job is working for Richard Foreman in BAD BOY NIETZSCHE! If right

now was a year ago I wouldn't be looking for a day job. Around four in the afternoon I could just throw my high heels and sexy stuff in a bag, take the train across to Wall Street, dance for two hours for a bunch of suits and leave with anywhere from 40 to 200 bucks.

But I can't do that no more.

It doesn't feel very timely and fashionable to be still complaining about Giuliani's anti-constitutional escapades.

Recently the owner of the upscale "gentlemen's club" Ten's mounted a legal challenge citing the City's lack of fuss over a naked male revue like "NAKED BOYS SINGING". A complaint reminiscent of the faint protest last year when you could pay 75 dollars to see Nicole Kidman's ass in THE BLUE ROOM but you couldn't pay 5 dollars and see Diamond-from-Flatbush's ass at The Club Cheetah. The New York Post seemed giddy over the story about Ten's versus NAKED BOYS, probably because it suggested liberal favoritism bestowed on wealthy, dangerous and well-organized gay men.

How super-cool it would have been if the producer of NAKED BOYS could have defended the right of the Ten's girls to get half as naked as his singing boys. But he didn't. He defended his show as being "legit."

His performers have Broadway credits, something he doubted that any of the girls of Ten's had.

Damn. So the Constitution is floating away like a sad, gorgeous balloon, and this doltish concept of legitimacy is rolling in like thick, sick clouds.

Margie Hart, the famously flaming redhead, probably knew all this by the mid 1930s, when Fiorello LaGuardia (himself subject of a jolly musical) got outraged over her famously flaming redhead pussy. So she shrewdly staged her redemption and "went legit in the theater world", not unlike other famous-in-their-lifetime adventuresses: Lola Montez, Victoria Woodhull. Though I like that Margie later became a real estate mogul, finally, undeniably owning stuff she could show.

So we know Margie's public response to Puritanism, though like most old burlesque queens we'll never know how old she was when she died. But what the hell has been the response of...who-the-hell-are-we—ILLEGITIMATE theater? Experimental by zip code theater? How have we answered this mayor, these restrictions, the doors they open to more and more restrictions? We've said and done fuck all, basically. There are, here and there, a few startup artsy-fartsy burlesque shows, coordinated by different downtown venues. I called one up, asked them about work. They didn't pay, even though they'd be selling beers to people looking at my ass. And then they felt it necessary to inform me that my act must "not just consist of titty dancing—there would have to be something ARTISTIC about it."

"No thanks," I said, and hung up, sad and angry and flooded with the memories of so many dancers, "titty dancers" who would have laughed at you if you called them artistic, but were dancing some larger, beautiful, wild, athletic dance that apparently can't be saved.

There has been some spirited response to this prohibition. Johanna Meyer's dance/performance piece TEASER (ONTOLOGICAL, CLOSED) thoughtfully deconstructed some old burlesque scenarios a la "Something Weird" videos, and caught the elusive center of that uneasy landscape that we can't quite read anymore. Who were these burlesque women, how was that sexy, and why is she wearing rabbit ears? Our questions run against themes disintegrating

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like old film, answered only by a doll-like dancer kicking dutifully into semi-darkness.

And Julie Atlas Muz, in her vivid and funny neo-burlesque acts, socks you with a personality so grand one thinks maybe this is the "it" those burlesque dancers had who made from farm girl to burlesque headlining queen.

Perhaps Meyer and Muz are charmed by the subjects of their work in a way that defies deadening categorizations of legitimacy or even of experiment.

Author Mary Gaitskill (BAD BEHAVIOR; TWO GIRLS, FAT AND THIN) worked as a stripper during the 70s, when the old time queens were losing ground to more explicit go-go girls who had no choreography, no fancy stage names, no elaborate costumes to break away or be plucked away by the trained pigeons of Rosita Royce. The old time burlesque queens knew they were on the way out, and would threaten to slice up the new girls if they danced too "trampy".

Well, I've still got the box cutter I used to carry around Times Square, but I don't know where to cut. So maybe I'll just go be a hostess at the Jacob Javits Convention Center.

In Times Square, there is a poster campaign for some New Times Square pinball arcade. Big yellow posters with big black letters read:

"WE GOT RID OF THE STRIPPERS, AND BROUGHT BACK THE FLIPPERS!"

Swap "stripper" for any other industry worker—"we got rid of the...textile workers, steel workers... clerical workers"—and it's shocking.

But in these decadent times, fattened on non-rigorous ideas of art and legitimacy, and sloppy, toothless, indulgent ideas of transgression, nobody bats an eye.

Juliana Francis

IMPOSSIBLE THEATER

Putrid, dead. So dead it is putrid, so putrid it cannot be but dead.

Haven't I been to this funeral before? The eye of REALISM, gone to heaven, offending the emptiness.

It is not real. It is a semblance of reality, a metaphor for the way things are, or were, or are accepted to be, a finger pointing at the word REAL.

Yet, the REAL is not an ISM. It is not a way to see, "realistically"; it is not a historically pardoned artistic approach, sanctioned for its safety.

It is, rather, the absence of the observer. It is something impossible. It is the absence of the communicator, of communication. It is what's happening when we're not around, the way things are when we aren't observing, contextualizing, signifying.

IF we can say that it means, THEN it is not real.

FOR THE OBJECT: There is no objectivity. There is no reality. There is only the REAL. And even then, impossible.

From the object we can learn silence.

I said, the word, hill.
You saw a hill in your mind.
It looked nothing like my, word, hill.

H - I - L - L .

It looked nothing like the hill I saw, in my mind, when I said, the word, hill.

In fact, I saw a leaf in a tree. In truth, I saw a long dark board, in my mind.

Not a hill at all.
And still, I said, the word, hill.

You said, the word, _____ .
Please, continue...

The audience sits in the theater, saying, "Ah, now we are in the country... Ah, I see. Now we are in the city. Ah, I see, this is happening in between cold walls, reminding me of a prison, which I've never seen, but surely I have read about it and seen it in other theaters and at the movies, too."

"Ah," says the audience, "I see."

"The action is set," says the program on the lap of the audience, "in Germany, in 1934." It also says, "Max... ..Bob Legume."

The audience says, "Ah, Bob Legume."
"Ah, that's Max," says the audience.
"Ah, Germany, I remember," says the audience, "I read it in a book, and I saw a play, and I also listened to a radio program, and saw a film and there was that other play about it, and so I know it, yes I do..." says the audience.

Matush Alepf

Translated by Matvei Yankelevich

EMERGENCY is a FREE and BI-WEEKLY gazette, providing an immediate response to what's really happening in theater, film and performance. EMERGENCY is not a consumer guide. The idea: To liberate the form of critical response from the limitation of conventional review etiquette. EMERGENCY seeks: essays, research reviews, manifestos, dialogues with colleagues, proposals for "impossible theater". Please send us word of open rehearsals, guerilla acts, collaborations, shows, and screenings.

What a topic! Today at the Chatroom, hosted by Vernon Reid and Critic Eye, in the Wine Cellar at Tonic, from 7 to 9. Wed, Feb 16. TONIC, 107 Norfolk St. FREE!

FREDERICK WISEMAN, AMERICAN (DOC) FILMMAKER
 MISSILE, Feb 17: 1&5:45, Feb 18: 3:25.
 SINAI FIELD MISSION, Feb 17 at 3:15 & 8, Feb 18 at 1.
 WELFARE, Feb 18 at 5:45 & 8:50.
 PRIMATE, Feb 21 at 1 & 6:15.
 MEAT (re: feed lots and packing plants), Feb. 22 at 1 & 6.
 MULTI-HANDICAPPED, Feb 23, 1&6:20.
 DEAF, Feb 23: 3:20&8:45, Feb 24: 6:15.
 Walter Reade Theater. Lincoln Center. 875-5600. \$9.

L'AGE D'OR IN BROOKLYN
 Bunuel's 1930 collaboration with Dali. Preceded by film by George Kuchar, HOLD ME WHILE I'M NAKED (1966). Sunday Feb 27 at 7 and 9:30. Ocularis. 70 North 6th St., Williamsburg. 718-388-8713. \$5.

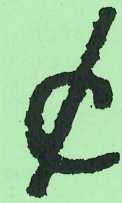
ANTHOLOGY ARCHIVES!
 Jarmusch (Mystery Train, Dead Man Night on Earth) all weekend, Feb 17-20. Jonas Mekas's BIRTH OF A NATION, Sunday, Feb. 20 at 7.
 Anita Thatcher & Gunvor Nelson: short films: Feb 24 at 8pm.
 TESTAMENT OF ORPHEUS (1959). Jean Cocteau's final self-examination. Sunday, Feb 27 at 8pm.
 Anthology Film Archives, 32 2nd Ave. 505-5110. \$8/\$5 for students.

ROBERT BECK MEM'L CINEMA
 Feb 22: Rich Pontius (of Boston) premieres THE LETTERS, a 7-year collaboration with Joe Shepard consisting of "film letters". + a film by Luther Price.
 Feb 29: Joe Yranks gives a talk on Colleen Moore with screenings of her silents. Tuesdays at 9 at Collective: Unconscious, 145 Ludlow St. \$5.

HANUMAN PRESENTS
 Vivien Bittencourt's videos, with Herbert Huncke, Allan Ginsberg, Cookie Mueller. Feb 29 at 7pm. Art in General Poetry Series, 79 Walker St., 219-0473. \$5.

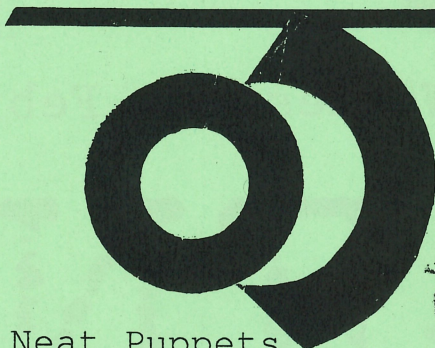
NOIR AT CINEMA CLASSICS
 Much Noir every day. Our Pick: LADY IN THE LAKE (1947) dir by Robert Montgomery. Filmed in subjective view the eyes of Philip Marlowe. March 2 at 8, March 3 at 8 and 9:45. Cinema Classics, 332 East 11th St. 971-1015. \$5.

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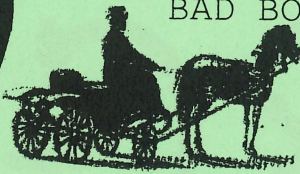


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 reading

THE EMERGENCY LAUNCH PARTY Piano Store (The)
 \$5 at the door. \$1 drinks. 158 Ludlow St.
 7pm to LATE
 Music by DJ NOMAD, Sam Hillmer/Abacus, and Jordan McLean & Co. in the Lounge.
 MEET THE MYSTERIOUS Bros. LUMIERE, eds. + neon tina; Manifesto Contest; two short plays by Julien Poirier and Filip Marinovic; Help us!



Neat Puppets
 Bread and Puppet Theater.
 Theater for the New City.
 Through Feb 20th.
 155 First Avenue.
 254 1109. Adults \$10, Children \$5.



THE EMERGENCY ROOM: RICHARD FOREMAN'S BAD BOY NIETZSCHE!

This sensual blitzkrieg demands innocence, an open head, deep breaths.

It blesses everyone who has tried to think through a thought and come up against the innumerable demon voices inside, braying "NO! STOP! DON'T GO THERE, STUPID!" It challenges us to remove the cataract of lies and conditioning acquired by looking around everyday at the seemingly indestructible empire central. (How can this ever get old? We need constant reminder: every moment is the moment of emergency.)

What happens when image-politics fail in such a context? The historical figure is reduced to a little boy with a wee-wee, a stack of scribbles, stage-fright and the clap. Upon entering St. Mark's it would perhaps be best to check ego at altar: such luggage will only impede the journey. Foreman demands that we travel light through the vision. Why not? The goal of the bad boy is ex-stasis.

What happens when our very speech abandons its intended meaning in the ears of the hearer? Foreman inspires us to cleanse our ears enough to mis-hear speech. And to admit that the capacity for mis-hearing can prove even more fruitful than hearing correctly. Mis-hearing resurrects the kid leaping back and forth between the spoken and mis-spoken word; unwraps a dialectic popsicle sweet to suck on and carve with the tongue into a luge coursing through the tubes of consciousness breakneck, far past the checkered finishing flag waved by any one man or ideology. Are "jewels" or "Jews" baked into a loaf of bread?

Foreman X-rays Nietzsche's portrait and finds his own face underneath it. The unmasking reveals a vulnerability both unique to his theater and liberating to the ontologically-hysterically-challenged, while applying the healing balm of laughter in liberal doses. We see penis and nipples, pajama and golf club, chalkboard and horsey, shipwreck and aardvark—all the things that still make theater a surprise.

Filip Marinovic

If you have a passion for gargantuan papier mache puppets, if they delight you beyond all else, drop your latest issue of Puppets & You, log off puppetry.org, snap the Julie Taymor reel out of your fire-engine red ViewMaster—and sprint to see the Bread and Puppet Theater, playing at Theater for the New City in the East Village.

In "The Need Canata" (the less interminable of the two acts), life-size puppets shuffle, lean, and shimmy about the enormous stage. Above, two giant feet, like nothing more than one of Terry Gilliam's Monty Python animations come to life, sway back and forth, operated by a Picasso-faced devil; abstract people-shells peel to reveal cartoonish businessmen. All the while, a variety of delightful homemade instruments twitter and warble from the sidelines.

Does it make sense? Does it come together in an artistically coherent way? Not so much. But neat puppets.

Yet, be warned, dear reader and possibly puppet fanatic: the evening's second act, "Insurrection Mass and Funeral Marches for Rotten Ideas," while promising in principle, is wearying. The company's fruitless and lackluster marching in circles, stripped of their enormous puppet cocoons and masks, adds up to a creaky diatribe.

Save for a manic violin and toy horn combo by slightly kooky-looking ringleader Peter Schulmann, the effort sadly undoes the previous act's pleasure. Still, for a spectacle of gigantic special effects and some curious instrumentation, the show is unique. And neat puppets. And generous slices of bread, slathered with a zesty mix of garlic and oil, are served after the performance.

Note: The Bread and Puppet Circus, showing on weekend afternoons—being a circus intended for children, and no doubt sans the smug agit-prop—is very likely a great deal of fun.

Mark Abrams

Reviews!



THE WINTER'S TALE
 Billed as "a rock-inspired production," it includes live music by Junior Fudge. Feb 3-27, Wed - Sat at 8, Sun at 7. Walker-space, 46 Walker St., 414-5136. \$15.

RICHARD III
 Edward Einhorn directs a big cast in a small space. Feb 4-27, Thu & Fri at 7:30, Sat at 7, Sun at 2:30. Nada, 167 Ludlow St., 420-1466.

HOUSATRASH
 Trav S.D. wrote, directed, produced, and stars in this satire of America, sub-titled A Musical About the Wretched Refuse. Jan 21-Feb 26 at 10:30. HERE, 145 6th Ave. 647-0202. \$12 includes free moonshine.

DONKEY SHOW
 Diane Paulus and Randy Weiner adapted A Midsummer's Night Dream and got a wack disco. Everything is fun and funny until the fairy dust kicks in and decadence ends in bestiality. Comedy (like disco) has never seemed so evil. Thu-Sun at 8, Fri & Sat at 10:30, Club El Flamingo, 547 W.21 St., 307-4100. \$25.

WEEKEND WITH CHARLES MEE
 Mee is one of the best American playwrights living today. Anne Bogart and the SITI Company continue their ambitious Guest Artist program with a weekend intensive workshop with the man himself. March 18 & 19 12-5pm. SITI Studio, 10 E.1 St., 477-1469.

ANGRY JELLO BUBBLES
 Each performance, the women who make up the cast of the Bubbles improvise text around a choreographed structure investigating the theme of beauty. Thu-Sun at 8pm. The Piano Store, 158 Ludlow, 420-1466.

BAD BOY NIETZSCHE!
 Richard Foreman's newest, about Nietzsche throwing his arms around a horse, at the Ontological-Hysterical Theater. St. Marks Church, 2nd Ave & 10th St., 533-4650. \$15.

CHARLIE VICTOR ROMEO
 Text taken from "black box" cockpit voice recorder transcripts of six major airline emergencies. Extended for the second time. Jan 13-Apr 1, Thu-Sat at 8. Collective: Unconscious. 145 Ludlow St. 254-5277. \$10.

TWO SERIOUS LADIES
 Look out Jane Bowles fans: Ken Rus Schmoll adapted and directed this never-before-staged Bowles novel. See it, before the five performances fly by. Feb 16-19 at 8, Feb 19 at 2. Horace Mann Theater, 120th St & B'way, 854-3859 / www.paperveins.org/jane. \$10/ \$5 stud.

FOOTFALLS AND ROCKABY
 Two of Beckett's later plays, directed by Christopher Voss and performed by Gwendolyn Bucci and Linda Bartholomai. Feb 17-27, Thu-Sun at 8pm. St. Mark's Theater, 94 St. Mark's Place, 252-5129. \$12/10 sdnt.

EDWARD SAID
 His lecture, entitled: "What is Humanism in 20th Century America?" Presented as part of Miller Theater's Theater of Ideas series. Part 1 Feb 16 at 8pm, Part 2 Feb 17 at 8, Part 3 Feb 18 at 8. Miller Theater, 116th Street & B'way, 854-1633. \$15.

IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME
 Peculiar Works presents this American satire. Wri by Barry Rowell, dir by Julia Whitworth. Feb 17-19, 24-26. Dixon Place, 309 E.26 St., 532-1546. \$12/8 stdnt.

FAST FORWARD FEEDING FRENZY
 Fast Forward composed this interactive and simultaneous performance of 4 chefs, 4 musicians, and 4 waiters as they serve up nouvelle dim sum to the audience. Feb 25&26 at 10pm. Kitchen, 512 W. 19 St., 255-5793. \$20

ANOTHER TELEPATHIC THING
 The promising new work by Big Dance Theater, the wonderful company headed by Paul Lazar and Annie-B Parson. Feb 17-Mar 5, Thu-Sat at 8, Sun at 3. Dance Theater Workshop, 219 W.19 St., 924-0077. \$15 first week, \$20 thereafter.

THE MIND KING
 This 1992 play by Richard Foreman, directed and performed by enthusiast Ian Hill. Hill runs the NADA theater, and this work is part of a year-long program of plays, workshops, festivals, and salons around the theme of "SEX, VIOLENCE, SCIENCE, AND GOD." The show runs Feb 22-Mar 8, Tues and Weds at 8pm. Runs concurrently with LAKE IVAN PERFORMANCE GROUP. NADA, 167 Ludlow, 420-1466. \$10.

LAKE IVAN PERFORMANCE GROUP
 A plotless ensemble piece created entirely through improvisation. Directed by David Finkelstein. Feb 22-Mar 8, Tues and Weds at 8pm. Runs concurrently with THE MIND KING. NADA, 167 Ludlow, 420-1466. \$10.

SHADOWBOX AT CLOUD CLUB
 Four floors of experimental entertainment and performance mixing theater and music in "BOX ONE". Evan O'Television, Amanda Palmer, Sara Thompson, Ephraim Lessell, Sebastian Lockwood & Jonah World Sacks, Bats of Hope, Fishmonger, Tessabelle... Costume dress encouraged. Fri, Feb 18, 8pm. Shadowbox Theatre, 229 Northampton St., Boston. RSVP to Amanda Palmer, 617-267-2635.

THE BALLADEER
 Set in a surreal high school dance, Big Art Group explores love. Feb 25-Apr 15. Fri and Sat at 10:30. Kraine Theater, 85 E.4th Street, 777-6088. \$12.

NORTH ATLANTIC
 The Wooster Group re-works and re-mounts a piece originally shown in 1984. Thru Feb 27, Tue-Sun at 8pm. 33 Wooster St., 966-3651. \$25 /ushering.

BRILLIANT TRACES
 Shellen Lubin directs Cindy Lou Johnson's two-character play. Feb 9-27, Wed-Sat at 8, Sun at 3. Trilogy Theater, 341 W.44 St., bet 8 & 9 Ave., 592-3804. \$15/\$12 stud/snr.

BOX
 Open salon every Saturday, 10pm till late. Says James, "Sometimes I'm in my underwear, people knock on the door, and the performance begins." Call 212-875-7171 for info. BOX, 70 Commercial St. (& Box St.), Storefront 102, Greenpoint, Brooklyn.

SALAD OF THE BAD CAFE
 Split Britches (Peggy Shaw, Stacey Makishi, and Lois Weaver) wrote and perform. Sound by Vivian Stoll and choreography by Stormy Brandenberger. Feb 17-Mar 4. La MaMa, 74A E 4th St., 475-7710.